

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of a dehydrated, rapidly rehydrating, vegetable product which comprises:

- a) partially dehydrating vegetable pieces to a moisture content from about 8% to about 30%,
- b) prior to compressing the vegetable piece in one dimension one or more solutes are added to the piece,
- c) compressing the vegetable piece in one dimension to about 0.2 to 2.5 mm, and
- d) thereafter further dehydrating the compressed vegetable piece to a moisture content of about 12% or lower,

wherein the vegetable piece when placed in water at a temperature of 90°C to 100°C without further application of heat is capable of rehydration substantially to its original fresh dimension and is of edible tenderness and texture instantly or within five minutes.

10. (Previously Presented): A process according to claim 9 wherein the vegetable is selected from the group consisting of carrots, peas, peppers, tomatoes, sweet corn, onion, squash, chillies, zucchini, mushroom, cabbage, celery, green beans, beetroot and pumpkin.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently amended): A process according to claim ~~11~~ 9 wherein said solutes are selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, sodium lactate, potassium lactate, sodium citrate, glucose, sucrose, fructose and sorbitol.

13. (Currently amended): A process according to claim 9 wherein the compressed vegetable piece in step d) is dehydrated to a moisture content from about 2% to about 12%.

14. (Original): A process according to claim 13 wherein the vegetable piece is dehydrated to a moisture content from 4% to 6%.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended): A process according to claim 9 wherein said vegetable piece is compressed in a roller mill ~~at a roller gap of 0.2 to 2.5 mm.~~

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended): A process according to claim ~~11~~ 9 wherein said added solutes are present in an amount from 0.3% to 10% w/w.

19. (New): A process according to claim 9 wherein the vegetable piece is dehydrated in step a) to a moisture content which is from about 8% to about 20%.